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TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2005

THIS REPORT PRESENTS THE TURKISH PRESS SUMMARY UNDER THREE
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BRIEFING

Bush Sends Message to Religious Tolerance Conference in Istanbul: President Bush sent a message to the second Peace and Tolerance Conference in Istanbul. The conference was sponsored jointly by the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate and the New York based Appeal of Conscience Foundation (ACF). In his message read by US Charge d'Affaires Nancy McEldowney, Bush praised Turkey as the 'ideal' country to hold such a gathering, and for being a 'bridge between cultures.' Bush said religious tolerance forms the basis for the United States, and was the main reason why the country's founders came to America from other countries. McEldowney said that Islam and terror should be linked to each other, adding that terrorism perpetrated in the name of religion is actually the greatest terrorism against religion. The head of Turkey's Religious Affairs (Diyanet), Professor Ali Bardakoglu, said that religious leaders should clearly explain that religion does not justify violence. 'We must also make it clear that religion cannot be used by the perpetrators of terrorism for their purposes,' Bardakoglu said. UNSYG Kofi Annan, European Commission President Barroso, and Pope Benedict XVI were among other leaders who sent letters to the conference.

Erdogan on Paris Riots: Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan told Turkish journalists aboard his plane yesterday that the riots in France proved the importance of the 'alliance of civilizations.' 'We have told the European Union that Turkey is very important from the perspective of cooperation among civilizations, but we are having difficulty in explaining this to some of our friends, especially to

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France,' Erdogan said. He claimed that the headscarf ban in French public schools is one of the elements that incited the riots. The PM reaffirmed that if Turkey is not admitted to the EU, clashes among civilizations will continue and the EU will become a 'Christian club.' Later in the day, Erdogan joined German Chancellor Schroeder at a dinner in Cologne. Turkey's opposition parties voiced strong reactions to the Prime Minister's comments. The main opposition Republican People's Party (CHP) said the remarks of Erdogan could be perceived as a call to Turks in Europe to join the protests. The True Path Party (DYP) described Erdogan's statement as 'dangerous.' The Democratic Left Party (DSP) lashed out at Erdogan, saying that the headscarf issue is the prime Minister's 'main concern.' An anonymous French official reportedly said that Erdogan was taking an 'opportunistic' approach to the unrest in France. Papers speculate that Turkish diplomats are uneasy about Erdogan's remarks, because they have given the impression that Turkey supports the rioters.

Erdogan on the 'CIA Plane' that Allegedly Landed in Turkey: Prime Minister Erdogan rejected yesterday press reports claiming that a CIA plane had secretly landed in Turkey to pick up terror suspects for transfer to the United States and subsequent interrogation. 'I have received no such information. I have spoken with the Interior Minister, and will also meet with the Undersecretary of the National Intelligence Organization (MIT.) We have no confirmation of these reports,' Erdogan said.

Karamanlis Visit to Turkey 'Not Scheduled': Turkish Prime Ministry Spokesman Akif Beki said yesterday that Greek Prime Minister Costas Karamanlis' state visit to Turkey has not been scheduled yet. 'Erdogan and Karamanlis want to meet in Turkey, but both leaders have busy schedules,' Beki said. Greek government sources had said over the weekend that the Karamanlis visit, the first such call by a Greek PM in Turkey in 46 years, had been postponed indefinitely. Athens wanted the visit to confirm good bilateral relations, but this is not possible right now, the sources said, citing three reasons: recent 'counterproductive' statements by

Turkish officials, the demonstration held by the extreme nationalist MHP-linked 'Gray Wolves' against the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Istanbul, and the leak of a document by Turkey's National Security Council (NSC) reaffirming that any attempt by Greece to extend its territorial waters in the Aegean to 12 miles will be a cause for war. Turkish diplomatic sources, however, told the Greek press that they still expect the visit to take place by the end of the year, and that the Greek government has given assurances to that end. Prime Minister Erdogan told the Turkish press on Monday that the Karamanlis visit will take place toward the end of December.

Rubin on the PKK: Michael Rubin, an expert on Turkey and the Middle East at the American Enterprise Institute (AEI), said that Iraqi Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) leader Massoud Barzani is protecting PKK terrorists, "Zaman" reports. Rubin wrote in the "New York Sun" last week that the struggle against the PKK has been a barometer for American prestige in Turkey, and blamed the US administration for not initiating an operation against the terrorist group. Rubin said that the KDP was selling support materials to PKK members who come down from the mountains during the winter. Rubin charged that Barzani protects the PKK and has been unable to provide security on Iraq's northern border. He added that a US offer to offer an amnesty if PKK accepts a ceasefire will ridicule the President Bush's struggle against terrorism.

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PKK Recruits Members in Baghdad: Despite the fact that they are opposed by US-led coalition forces and Iraqi politicians, the terror organization PKK has intensified its activities in Iraq, "Yeni Safak" reports. The report notes that the PKK has opened a political liaison office in Baghdad, and claims that PKK militants have started coming down from the Kandil mountains to establish checkpoints and recruit new members in parts of Suleymaniye province.

PKK Groups Fight over Extortion Money: Groups within the PKK are divided by disagreements about how to share profits they are collecting from extortion and drug smuggling, "Hurriyet" reports. The Governor of Hakkari, Erdogan Gunduz, said that the PKK had been transformed into a 'criminal network.' Gunduz said that the terrorist organization is punishing businessmen in the region who pay 'taxes' to rival groups within the PKK, and cited this as the main reason behind recent attacks in Turkey's southeastern provinces. 'The PKK is losing popularity,' Gunduz said, adding that the organization is staging bombing attacks to scare people and raise more funds.

US Supports OSCE Assessment of Azerbaijani Polls: "Zaman" reports that the US is supporting the OSCE assessment concerning irregularities in the November 6 parliamentary elections in Azerbaijan. US State Spokesman Adam Ereli said that despite some improvements over previous elections, the US has 'serious concerns' about charges of election fraud. 'The United States looks to President Aliyev's government to take corrective action in the districts where impartial and transparent investigations show that irregularities and fraud affected the results. We call on all citizens of Azerbaijan to address complaints about election violations through legal and peaceful channels and to refrain from violence. We urge the government of Azerbaijan to allow for peaceful freedom of assembly and to exercise restraint in responding to protests,' Ereli said.

MFA on Azerbaijani Polls: The Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) expressed satisfaction over the parliamentary elections in Azerbaijan in a statement issued on Monday. 'We welcome the fact that the elections were held without incident,' the MFA said, and expressed hope that calm and stability will continue in Azerbaijan. Fifty-two Turkish observers were present during the elections held in

Azerbaijan on Sunday.

Greek Cypriots Veto EU Money to Turkish Cyprus: Turkish Cypriot leader Mehmet Ali Talat said that the Greek Cypriot administration does not want to see the economy of the 'TRNC' improved, the semi-official Anatolian News Agency (AA) reported on Monday. 'The Greek Cypriot administration has been trying to prevent the TRNC from making use of EU financial assistance,' Talat said, in reference to a veto cast by Nicosia against a declaration by the EU regarding the release of 259 million Euros in financial aid to Turkish Cypriots. If the regulation is not approved before December 31, the 'TRNC' will not receive the first tranche of assistance.

Greek Diplomats Visit Ankara: A seven-member delegation of Greek diplomats met with Mustafa Dundar, spokesman for the Turkish Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee, the semi-official Anatolian News Agency (AA) reported on Monday. The delegation came to Turkey within the context of cooperation among Turkish Foreign Ministry (MFA) and foreign diplomatic academies for training purposes. The Greek Foreign Ministry has agreed to train Turkish diplomatic officials on EU-

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related matters.

Turkey Trains Iraqi Diplomats: On Monday, Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul told the opening of a training course for young Iraqi diplomats by the Turkish Foreign Ministry (MFA) that Iraq will become a peaceful country by protecting its integrity, adding that Turkey will continue to support the Iraqi people. 'Iraq is going through a difficult transition period, and all its neighbors consider helping Iraq as a duty,' Gul noted. The training program, to be held from November 7 - December 16, aims at assisting with the reorganization of the Iraqi Foreign Ministry.

Turkmen Journalist Killed in Mosul: "Yeni Safak" reports from Baghdad that unidentified masked gunmen killed a Turkmen journalist, Ahmad Hussein al-Maliki, during a raid on an internet cafe in Mosul. Al-Maliki was the editor of the daily "Tal Afar", according to the report.

Naval Exercises in the Aegean, Mediterranean: Turkey's Minex-2005 and Eastern Mediterranean-2005 naval exercises will be carried out in the Aegean Sea and Mediterranean Sea simultaneously from November 8-18, the Anatolian News Agency (AA) reported. The Turkish Naval Forces Command said on Monday that Turkish Minex-2005, the naval exercise held annually to develop training and cooperation against mines, will be conducted in the Aegean. Turkey, Bulgaria, France, Italy, Germany, Spain, and Greece will participate in the exercise. The Eastern Mediterranean exercise will be held in the Eastern Mediterranean with the participation of assault boats, submarines, and logistic support vessels from Turkey, Germany, France, and Spain.

Novelist Pamuk Awarded 'Prix Medicis Etranger': Acclaimed Turkish author Orhan Pamuk will be awarded the Prix Medicis Etranger in France for his most recent novel 'Snow,' papers report. On October 23, Pamuk received the Peace Prize given by the German Booksellers Association. Pamuk is due to face trial in Istanbul on December 16 for 'insulting the Turkish identity' in an interview with a Swiss daily, where he said that 1,000,000 Armenians and 30,000 Kurds had been killed in Anatolia, and that nobody in Turkey has the courage to say so. The Pamuk case is seen by the EU as a test of Turkey's progress on human rights and freedom of expression.

48 Protesters Detained in Rally to Protest YOK: Police detained 48 protestors among a large group of university students rallying on the November 7 anniversary of the establishment of the Higher Education Board (YOK) on Monday in Ankara. Students from Istanbul and other provinces chanted slogans against the YOK, and demanded that the Board

be abolished. Riot police intervened and sprayed pepper gas after the students threw stones at them. Fifteen Molotov cocktails were seized at the demonstration.

EDITORIAL OPINION: Azerbaijan Elections; FTAA; France

"A Post-Election Test"

Sami Kohen commented in the mass appeal "Milliyet" (11/8): "Most foreign observers and journalists agree that some irregularities and violations occurred in Azerbaijan during the election campaign and on voting day. But it is not unusual to see shortcomings in a country like Azerbaijan, where the democratic process is relatively new. At least we can say that democratic progress has been made compared with the previous two elections in 2000 and 2003. . The ruling party claims that all is well, while the opposition alleges vast irregularities from beginning to end. At this point,

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Azerbaijan should be able to put all claims about election wrongdoing into the hands of its judiciary. Whether Azeri politicians will be able to demonstrate this kind of mature attitude remains to be seen. This response is an even more important test than the election itself."

"To What Extent is the US a World Power?"

Ilter Turkmen opined in the mass appeal "Hurriyet" (11/8): "One of the main impacts of the Iraq war is the creation of anti-Americanism around the world. The most recent example was the Summit of Americas in Mar del Plata. It was interesting to see that President Bush remained calm despite Chavez's provocative anti-American remarks. President Bush apparently did not want to risk American oil investments in Venezuela, so he kept his cool. This is another indication that American power has its limits. . Currently, a majority of Latin American countries either oppose the US-proposed Free Trade Agreement or are showing no interest in it. Although the US will remain the only global power for many years to come, it no longer has the power to intervene all around the world and to get its way on every issue. Even in its own backyard, American authority is in decline. While it might be emotionally satisfying to be pleased by the weakening of the US, it is also useful to consider that this development could bring chaos to the world's political and strategic balances."

"France Pays for its Racist Policies"

Hakan Celik commented in the mass appeal/tabloid "Posta" (11/8): "France has never treated its immigrants from Northern Africa as its own citizens. On the contrary, France forced them into ghettos. While the UK has managed to integrate foreigners successfully, France has continuously excluded them from public life. ... Referring to the protesting immigrants as 'looters,' Interior Minister Sarkozy reflects this same racist approach. In the past, he has also been outspoken in his campaign to exclude Turkey from the EU. France's power is in continuous decline because it cannot keep up with this century's pace of change on political, social, and economic issues."

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